HOTEL POST
OF THE
SIEBENBÜRGISCHER
KARPATHENVEREIN
(CARPATHIAN SOCIETY OF TRANSYLVANIA)

HOHE RINNE AND BISTRA

BY

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NORWALK, CONNECTICUT 1977

SOCIETY FOR HUNGARIAN PHILATELY
MONOGRAPH SERIE
NUMBER 5

Published August 1977 by the
SOCIETY FOR HUNGARIAN PHILATELY

Post office Box 1162
Samp Mortar Station
Fairfield, Connecticut 06430

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Society for Hungarian Philately
Printed in U. S. A.

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FOREWORD

The issues of the Carpathian Society of Transylvania (Erdélyi Kárpátegyesület or in German: Siebenburgischer Karpathenverein) represent an important chapter in the discussion of the so-called Cinderella stamps. In spite of this, however, except a small handbook published in 1962 by the Williams brothers, in London and a few articles written by them about the same time in British stamp magazines, no literature is available on these issues. In fact, there is practically no literature on these issues in either Hungarian or Romanian.

This monograph has the aim to fill this gap. It was compiled by using various sources: the handbook of the Williams' brothers* and their articles as well as private information from them; besides these, I also utilized various Hungarian philatelic material, and history books, furthermore my own collection.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Williams brothers for the information given to me in our correspondence.

Norwalk, Connecticut, March 28, 1977.

L. S. ETTRE

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* L. N. and M. Williams, "Hotel Posts of Hungary and Romania". Authors' publication, 30 Dunstan Road, London NW11, 1962.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background: About the Society

The Carpathian Society of Transylvania (in Hungarian: Erdélyi Kárpátegyesület - in German: Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein) was founded in 1880 with the aim to explore and propagate the Carpathian Mountains in Transylvania. The center of the Society was in Nagy Szeben (in German: Hermannstadt - present Romanian name: Sibiu). Although the aim of the Society referred to the whole Carpathian Mountain Range in Transylvania, in fact, it was active only in the Southern part.

The Society was very active: opened and marked many trails in the mountains and forests and, by about 1894, it established 22 shelters and chalets in the mountains. The Society also published guides and other literature.

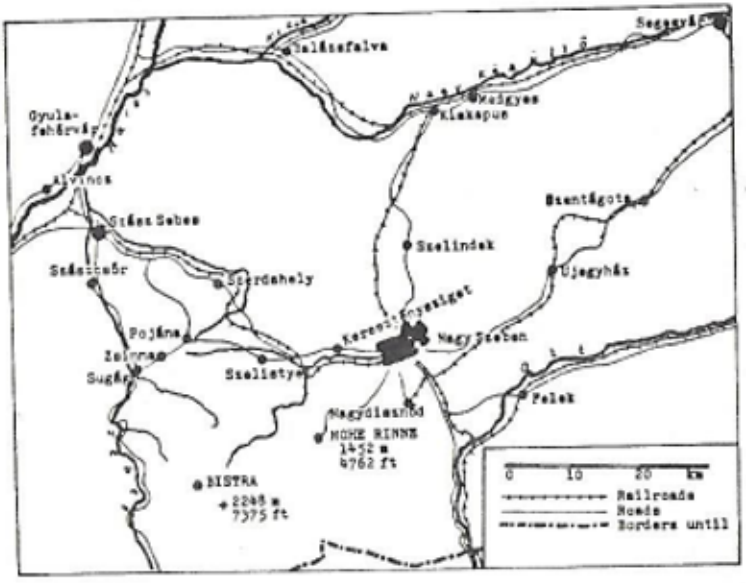
The official language of the Society was German. This - Southern - area of Transylvania, in the Szász Sebes - Nagy Szeben - Brassó (the German names of the three cities: Mühlbach - Hermannstadt - Kronstadt; the present Romanian names: Sebes - Sibiu - Brasov) region had an ancient German population; the settlers were brought in in the middle of the 12th century by the Hungarian king G é z a II (1141-1162) from the Rhine-area and Flanders. In 1224, King A n d r á s II (1205-1235) granted them special privileges, including a partial autonomy and the right to use German as their official language. The area was called the K i r á l y f ö l d (King's land) indicating that the inhabitants directly belonged to the King of Hungary.

Two of the shelters founded by the Society were soon transformed to cottage colonies, summer resorts. Season was usually between May-June and September. These two are H o h e R i n n e and B i s t r a.

At the end of the First World War, Transylvania was first occupied by and then incorporated into Romania. We have no data about the future activities of the Society although it is safe to assume that it continued, at least for some time. As will be discussed later, Hohe Rinne continued to function while Bistra was either closed or maintained only as a shelter and not any more as a resort.

Maps Nos. 1 and 2. The Kingdom of Hungary prior to the end of the First World War (top) and the same area after the treaties of St. Germain (with Austria) and Trianon (with Hungary). Within historical Hungary the city names are given in Hungarian in the top map and in the language of the successor state in the lower map.

The Carpathian Society of Transylvania (using its German acronym: SKV) was not the only society in Transylvania with the aim of promoting tourism. The other society had its seat in Kolozsvár (in Romanian: Cluj) and its name was the Erdélyrészi Kárpát Egyesület (EKE: Carpathian Society of the Transylvanian Part - meaning the Transylvanian part of Hungary) and its president and founder was count Bálint B e t h l e n. The EKE functioned mainly in the areas inhabited by Hungarians or owned by Hungarian high nobility. We should note that the German inhabitants in their area were mostly businessmen, artisans, shopkeepers and like, and the SKV was their society.



Map No. 3. The area around Nagy Szeben involved in this discussion. Town names are given in Hungarian except the names of the two resorts.

Geography

Maps Nos. 1 and 2 show the so-called historical Hungary before and after the peace treaties following the First World War, and Map No. 3 shows the area of interest concerning our present discussion. This is a highly mountainous area, particularly south of the Szász Sebes - Nagyszeben line. The pass through which the O l t river is flowing is the only connection with the area south of the Carpathian range.

In Map No. 3 the Hungarian town names are used. Of course, it is a basic problem in any discussion of the postal history of the dissolution of the Kingdom of Hungary that town names used at the time of interest do not correspond to the present-day use. In Southern Transylvania the problem is compounded by the fact that prior to 1918 both Hungarian and German names were used and one cannot find any collection where the town names are listed in three languages (Hungarian, German and Romanian).

I tried to compile such a list of the towns indicated on Map No. 3. I could not find the German name of six towns or villages but these are not too important concerning this discussion.

TABLE I

TRILINGUAL LIST OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Hungarian	German	Romanian
Alvincz	?	Vinta de Jos
Balázsfalva	Blasendorf	Blaj
Felek	Frek	Avrig
Gyulafehérvár	Karlsburg	Alba Iulia
Keresztényszíget	Grossau	Cristian
Kiskapus	?	Copsa Mica
Medgyes	Mediasch	Medias
Nagydisznód	Heltau	Cisnadie
Nagy Szeben	Hermannstadt	Sibiu
Pojána	?	Poiana Sibiului
Segesvár	Schässburg	Sighisoara
Sugag	?	Sugag
Szászcsór	?	Sasciori
Szász Sebes	Mühlbach	Sebes
Szelindek	Stolzenburg	Slimnic
Szelistye	?	Seliste
Szentágota	Agnethlen	Agnita
Szerdahely	Reismarkt	Mircurea
Ujegyház	Leschkirch	Nocrich
Zsinna	?	Jinna

I should also mention that there was no Hungarian name for "Hohe Rinne". The name one can find for Bistra is "Bisztratelep" or Bistra settlement. The present-day Romanian name for Hohe Rinne is Paltinis. Bistra doesn't exist anymore as the original settlement; however, one should note that "Bistra" in fact is a Romanian name.

A Little Grammar and Pronunciation Guide

For those who do not know the German and Hungarian languages, a few remarks are given here.

The gender of the German word "Rinne" is feminine; thus, it is Hohe Rinne. However, in conjugation, the ending is changed. Thus, "on the Hohe Rinne" is "auf der hohen Rinne" and this is the text on the stamps and on most of the cancellers.

Concerning the German spelling, in some words we can see either "c" or "k" used. The case in point is "Section" which is also spelled as "Sektion".

The Hungarian names of the towns of Nagy Szeben and Szász Sebes have been used in two different ways: written in two words or written as Nagyszeben and Szászsebes. "Nagy" and "Szász" are adjectives meaning "great" and "Saxon" respectively.

It is very difficult to pronounce Hungarian words because the sounds are so much different than those in English. In Hungarian we pronounce every letter except the double letters which have one sound. There are a number of such double letters in Hungarian (just like the th in English). One such is "sz" which sounds as s in his. One should not mix it with "zs", another double letter, the sound of which is like the j in journal (with somewhat less "d" in it). The letter "s" is pronounced as sh in shoe; thus one would not mix the "sz" with "s"! Another double letter is "cs" which sounds like ch in child. Then, we have a number of double letters having "y" as the second letter; it serves as a softening character. For example, "ny" sounds like the Spanish "n" in manana. The "gy" is also a double letter; thus "nagy" should be pronounced as "nod'y" - using Webster's pronunciation signs - and not as nagi as gi in Gideon, a common error among Americans. The letter "ty" sounds like tth in Matthew while "ly" sounds like j in hallelujah.

In Hungarian vowels exist with and without accent (a, á, e, é, o, ó, ö, ő, u, ú, ü, ű). Here the accent does not define the stress (in Hungarian the first syllable always has the stress) but modifies the sound to a different one. For example, in Kereszténysziget the first two "e" sound like e in Emil while "é" sounds like the rain in Spain. In Pojána, the last "a" is like "o" in "top" (except that we say it a little longer) while the "á" is like "i" in memoir.

There has been one double letter which really represented an archaic spelling. This is "cz" used prior to about 1924 to spell the sound "c" as in "cent". After about 1924, this spelling was simplified by deleting the "z"; thus e.g. the present-day spelling of the town Alvincz would be Alvinc.

PART TWO: THE ISSUES OF "HOHE RINNE"

This cottage colony was established in 1894 by the Carpathian Society of Transylvania. "Hohe Rinne" is a German expression: in English, it means "high groove". The cottage colony comprised of a group of log buildings and they were at an elevation of 4600 ft (1403 méters): it is located about 20-25 km from the small town of Kereszténysziget (in German: Grossau - present Romanian name: Cristian). The founders of the resort were Dr. Carl C o n r a d t and Robert G u t t.

The resort attracted guests mostly from Nagy Szeben (in German: Hermannstadt - present Romanian name: Sibiu) but some came from distant places of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It is natural for people on vacation that they want to write postal cards and receive mail; this was even more true in the period we are dealing with, when it was customary to send the wife and the children for the whole Summer to a resort. However, the nearest post office at Kereszténysziget was fairly far away (let us not forget that there were no superhighways at that time; narrow dirt roads existed only, carved in the sides of the mountains) and the Royal Hungarian Postal Service refused to deliver mail to the resort and pick up mail there.

In order to satisfy the guests' requirements the Society established a currier service between the resort and the post office of Kereszténysziget, using a two-wheeled horse cart, and charged 2 Kreuzer (Krajczár) for carrying letters or cards.

Sometime in 1895 - probably in June - a stamp was issued as an acknowledgment of prepayment of the fee. From this time on, various stamps were issued periodically and a kind of regular private mail service was established between the resort and the nearest post office. Until 1908, the mail was carried to Kereszténysziget post office; from 1908 on, the mail was sent directly to Nagy Szeben and handled there by Nagy Szeben No. 1 post office*.

At the beginning the rate for a card and a letter was the same, 2 Kreuzer. Sometime between 1896 and 1900, the rate for a card was reduced to 1 kr but no new stamp was issued: thus, cards with bisected stamps of the 1896 issue are known as payment for half of the value of the stamp.

In 1900, the currency in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was changed from Forint (Gulden) - Krajczár (Kreuzer) to Korona (Krone) - fillér (Heller)** and generally, one old forint was equivalent to two new Korona. On this occasion the local rates were also changed*** to 2 h for cards and 4 h for letters. In 1906 the rate for letters was changed to 5 h. In 1910, the rate for the post cards was changed to 3 h.

After the Romanian take-over in 1918, the currency changed to the Romanian currency, Leu - Bani. The exchange rate was one to ten, i.e., 3 fillér was now equivalent to 30 Bani and thus, the stamps were sold for 30 and 50 Bani but the numerals 3 and 5 remained unchanged. Finally, in the case of the 1924 issue, the value of the stamps was changed to 50 Bani and 1 Leu but the denomination is not given on the stamps.

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* We have no data how this was done. Nagy Szeben is not close and a simple two-wheeled horse cart cannot easily travel there.

** In parenthesis the names in German.

*** As mentioned in the Introduction, German was the common language in this area; thus the German names and abbreviations ("h" for Heller) were used on the stamps.

The Hohe Rinne stamps were used to pay for the local service, i.e., for carrying the mail to Kereszténysziget and from 1908 on to Nagy Szeben No. 1 post office. From the official post office, the mail was carried by the regular Hungarian postal service, even if the letter was addressed only to Kereszténysziget or Nagy Szeben. Thus, the cards or letters also had to have the regular Hungarian (and then, from 1918 on, Romanian) postage stamps. The hotel post stamps were cancelled at the resort by the Society (see discussion below) while the Hungarian postal stamp was cancelled by the respective post office of Kereszténysziget and later Nagy Szeben.

After the Romanian take-over, the Hungarian canceller of Nagy Szeben No. 1 post office remained in use for some time: the new Romanian canceller was introduced only on October 5, 1920.

Generally the two - hotel post and regular Hungarian - stamps should not have been affixed close to each other: on covers, the hotel post stamp was supposed to be affixed to the backside while the regular Hungarian stamp to the usual place on the front. The same regulation also existed for picture cards; at least, the hotel post stamp supposed to be affixed to the left top corner. However, in most of the cases, this regulation was not followed and the hotel post stamps were simply affixed next to the regular postage stamp. This is particularly true in the Romanian period.

The local postal service at the resort existed until sometime in 1926 when the Royal Romanian Postal Service established a regular office at the resort, now called P a l t i n i s. However, cards dated in 1927 and still having the hotel post stamps are known.

Paltinis was then later further developed and even today, it is a popular resort.

Finally, two interesting questions should be raised:

(1) Of course, the local hotel post had to be a two-way street, and it handled not only mail from the resort but also mail to the resort. I could, however, not find any data on the latter type of service while similar procedure is known in case of Bistra (see later). For example, did they affix a hotel post stamp on the incoming mail?

It is understandable that such mail is virtually nonexistent. After all, who kept mail obtained while on vacation and took it home with him? Still, the question is open and unanswered.

(2) It is known that after the Romanian occupation in late 1918, various overprinted series were issued in Transylvania and these were valid for a couple of years in the area. It is almost certain that such stamps were also in use at Hohe Rinne; however, there is no mentioning of the existence of any cover or post card with such franking.

After this general discussion let us now deal separately with the individual issues.

First Issue - June 1895

The design of the stamp consisted of the three-lined text "KURHAUS / auf der / HOHEN RINNE" in an ornamental frame (Figure 1).

The stamps were typeset by W. Krafft of Nagy Szeben by hand press (Tiegelpresse); the printing is black on yellow paper.

We do not know exactly the form how the stamps were printed: it was in a strip form but whether only one continuous roll was printed or a number of strips is not sure. The stamps were perforated (Perf. 11) between stamps so that the upper and lower edges of the stamps are imperforate, and usually rough. Naturally, a stamp from the end of the roll (or strip) would have perforation on only one side.

A maximum of 500 stamps was printed; from these maybe 20 have survived. Only single specimens are known.

One error print is know having the ornament at foot sideways.

The stamps were most likely issued in June 1895.

Second Issue - 1896

The month when the stamps were issued is not known. The design is somewhat similar to the first issue but lower case letters are used in different sizes, and the frame is more orante. The stamps were typeset by W. Krafft; they are imperforate.

The stamps were printed in black on yellow paper. Two types exist differing in the distance between the three text lines and the shade of the color of the paper:

Type I: The middle line ("auf der") is closer to the top line ("Kurhaus") than to the lower line ("Hohen Rinne"); the paper is greyish-yellow.

Type II: The three lines are evenly spaced; the paper is pale yellow.

Figures 2/a-b show the two types of the second issue.

Probably Type II has never been used in actual mail but only cancelled by favor.

In the literature the number of stamps issued is given as 1000 of each type but it might be more.

Bisected stamps on postal cards are known. These are due to the fact discussed earlier that between 1896 and 1900 the rate for postal cards was reduced from 2 kr to 1 kr, while the value of the stamps was 2 kr.

Third Issue - September 1900

In September 1900, two stamps of a new design were issued. These stamps have a standing rectangular size, with the name of the resort (KURHAUS AUF DER HOHEN RINNE) and the denomination in an upright oval, enclosed in a rectangular frame with decoration in the four corners and in the oval. The printing was done by W. Krafft of Nagy Szeben, by lithography, in sheets of 12 (three stamps in each horizontal row). The color of the paper is rose for the 2-h stamp and yellow for the 4-h stamp; in the latter case, shades exist. The stamps were produced with Perf. 11 1/2 and also imperforate; the total number produced was 4800 (400 sheets) of the perforate and 192 (16 sheets) of the imperforate, of each value.

Figure 3 shows stamps of the third issue; Figure 4 shows a 4-h stamp together with a Hungarian stamp cancelled on July 7, 1903, at Kereszténysziget.

Bisected 4-h stamps are known on postcards, used in lieu of the 2-h stamp.

Fourth Issue - July 5, 1903

Since the guests at the resort evidently wrote more postal cards than letters, the supply of 2-h stamps exhausted

sooner than the supply of the 4-h stamps. Therefore, on July 5, 1903, a new issue of the 2-h stamp was introduced, in the same color and having the same design, except that the year was added to the design, just above the value. Figure 5 shows stamps of this issue.

Figure 1.
The first issue.

(a) Type I (b) Type II

Figure 2.
The two types of
the second issue.

Figure 3.
Stamps of the
third issue.

Figure 4.
The 4-h stamp of
the third issue,
with a Hungarian
stamp cancelled at
Kereszténysziget.

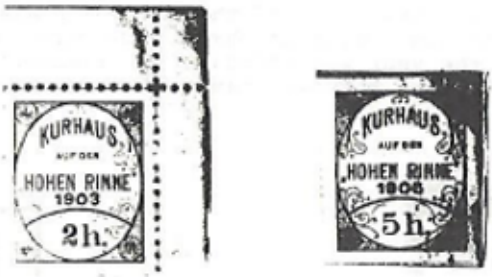


Figure 5.
Types of the fourth through sixth issues.

Again, the stamps were prepared by W. Krafft in Nagy Szeben, by lithography, but now in sheets of 110 stamps containing eleven horizontal rows of 10 stamps.* Figure 6 shows one horizontal strip of ten stamps from a sheet. The total number of stamps issued is listed as 10,000 perforated and 2,000 imperforated; however, these are rounded numbers and most likely, the total number of sheets was about 90 (9900 stamps) of the perforate and 18 (1980 stamps) of the imperforate. Some sheets were perforated only between the stamps, i.e. marginal stamps had their outside edge imperforated.

Fifth Issue - August 3, 1906

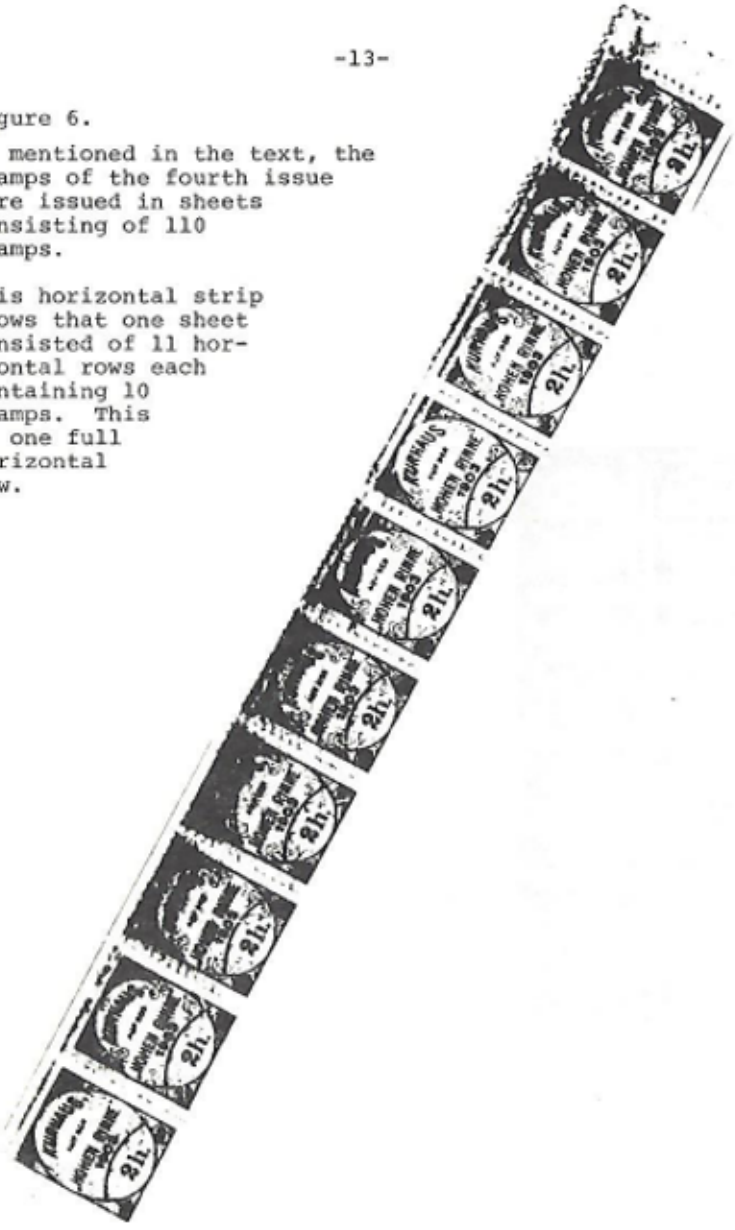
In 1906, the rate for a letter was raised from 4 h to 5 h. On this occasion, on August 3, a new issue of both stamps was prepared. The design is identical to the previous issue, except that now, the year 1906 is indicated, and the color of the paper is changed: it is deep red for the 2 h and light green for the 5 h stamp. Stamps of this issue are shown in Figure 5.

* In the original edition of the booklet of the Williams brothers, the sheet is given as containing 10 x 10 stamps and this was corrected by them in private correspondence.

Figure 6.

As mentioned in the text, the stamps of the fourth issue were issued in sheets consisting of 110 stamps.

This horizontal strip shows that one sheet consisted of 11 horizontal rows each containing 10 stamps. This is one full horizontal row.



The stamps were produced by W. Krafft of Nagy Szeben, in sheets of 100, both perforated (Perf. 11 1/2) and imperforated. Total number of printing was 8,000 perforated and 2,000 imperforated for the 2-h stamp and 10,000 perforated for the 5-h stamp.

The sheets were perforated only between stamps, thus marginal copies are imperforate on the outside edge(s). Sheets having perforation only between stamps in vertical direction also existed. Figure 7 shows a block of eight stamps having only vertical perforation.

Figure 7. In the sheet from which this block of eight stamps was taken, perforation was only done in vertical direction.

The gum on the 5-h stamp was most likely applied after perforation: it migrated through the holes into the front side of the stamp.

Sixth Issue - July 31, 1909

This pair was issued on July 31, 1909. The design is the same as in the previous issues except that now, the year 1909 is indicated on the stamp. Printing was again done by lithography, by W. Krafft in Nagy Szeben, in sheets of 50. The color of the paper of the 5-h stamp was changed from light green to green (emerald). Total printing was 2,000 copies of each issue. Perforation was 11 1/2 and is characterized by blunt pins resulting in a rough perforation.

This issue was used only in 1909, for about 2-3 months and is the rarest of the Hohe Rinne issues (except the first issue). From the 2-h stamp only a few copies are known to exist. Used 5-h stamps are also rare: as indicated by the Williams brothers, only six copies, all on covers from one correspondence are known. Mint copies of the 5-h stamps are somewhat less rare although still scarce.

The remaining stamps of the 1909 issue were stored in a post cart. Since next year, a new series was issued, the stored stamps were kept there. This cart, together with the stamps, was burned down a few years later, destroying these copies.

Seventh Issue - April 1, 1910

Finally, in 1910, a pair of stamps with new design was issued. The design shows a view of the colony and is the artwork of Hans H o c k e r, an architect. The stamps were relief-printed by Josef Drotleff of Nagy Szeben in sheets of four, Perf. 11 1/2.

Figure 8 shows the two stamps of this issue.

The color of the 3-h stamp was brown and of the 5-h stamp, it was green. The stamps were reprinted a number of times in the period of their validity (between April 1, 1910 and June 2, 1923) in order to maintain a constant supply at the resort; thus, different shades of each color exist. Generally it can be said that the darker shades represent earlier printings and, in fact, these are more scarce.

The total number of stamps printed in this period was:

3 h	-	22,860	(5,715 sheets)
5 h	-	14,960	(3,740 sheets)

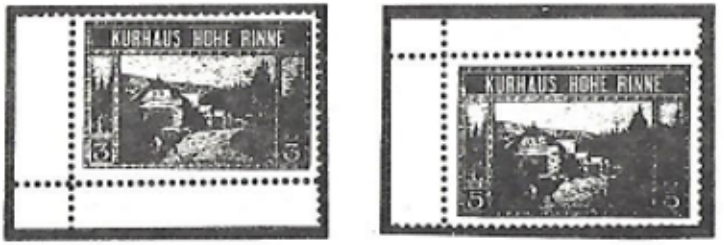


Figure 8
The two stamps of the seventh and eighth issues.

For the printing, four stereos (cliches) were prepared for each denomination and these were locked together in the following form:

A	B
C	D

Each stereo has minor differences from which the position of any stamp in the sheets can be recognized. These characteristics are listed below, based on an article by the Williams brothers*:

3 Heller stamp:

A The second roof of the four in the center of the design has one dot and one line of shading.

B The second roof has three heavy lines of shading.

C The second roof has two dots and one line of shading.

D The right top corner of the stamp shows slight thickening of the top outer frame.

4 Heller stamp:

A The top outer frame has a wick in it, above and to the right of the "E" in RINNE.

B The first roof of the four in the center of the design is heavily shaded, and the fourth roof has a diagonal line through it.

C There is no shading on three roofs in the center of the design and there is an uncolored flaw above the first roof, rather resembling a butterfly with folded wings.

D There is a tiny nick on the inside of the left vertical of the "H" of KURHAUS, just above the cross-bar.

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* L. N. and M. Williams: "Cinderella Stamp Corner". The Stamp Magazine (Great Britain), August 1962.

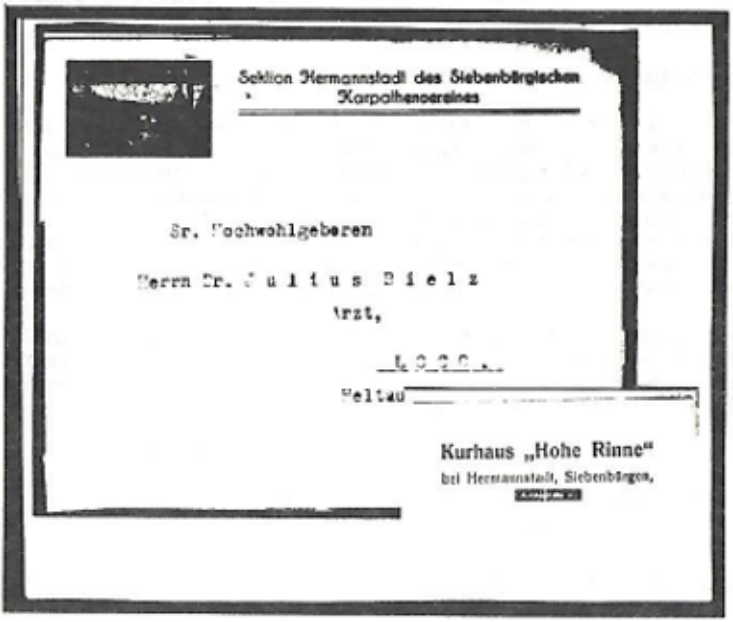

Figure 9.

This is a copy of the envelope issued in 1910. The small piece on the right, bottom is a copy of the backside of the envelope. Its text means "Resort Hotel 'Hohe Rinne', at Hermannstadt (Nagy Szeben), in Transylvania". Originally "Ungarn" (Hungary in German) was printed in the third row; however, after the Romanian take-over - and this cover was sold after 1918 - this was blocked out as seen here.

Postal Stationary of 1910. In 1910 postal stationary consisting of an envelope and sheets of notepaper was also issued. On the envelope, the design of the stamp is printed in greenish black in the upper left corner, having the numeral of the value obliterated. On the notepaper sheets, similar impressions but with star-like ornaments in the lower corners, exist. Figure 9 shows a copy of the envelope.

Eighth Issue - June 2, 1923

On June 2, 1923, the color of the stamps was changed to deep blue (3 h) and orange brown (5 h). Actually the denomination was already changed when, in November 1918, the area was annexed into Romania: the Romanian currency was 1 Leu = 100 bani, and a 3-h stamp sold for 30 bani and a 5-h stamp for 50 bani. However, the stereos of the stamps were used unchanged, having the old numerals: the stamps were simply sold for 10 times the value listed.

The new printing was carried out by using the original stereos (cliches) of the 1910 issue, again in sheets of four; however, now, the sequence of the stereos changed and represented the following configurations:

3 h stamp:

A	D
B	C

5 h stamp:

A	C
D	B

Thus, the characteristics listed above, for the 1910 issue now refer to these positions.

A total of 5360 stamps (1340 sheets) was printed of each stamp. Although the stamps were produced in one printing, color shades exist. Perforation is 11 1/2 but the holes are smaller than in the 1910 issue.

Ninth Issue - June 10, 1924

In order to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the resort, two new stamps were issued. The design shows a panorama of the cottages and the portraits of the two founders appear in the two upper corners having the date "1894 - 10.JUNI - 1924" between them. The portrait of Dr. Carl C o n r a d t is on the left and that of Robert G u t t on the right. Figure 10 shows a copy of the stamps.

Figure 10.
A copy of the Ninth Issue.

The stamps were designed by Géza v. J a k o t s and the final drawings were prepared by Colonel Theodor L a s s y: their names appear in minuscule letters in the lower left (G.v.Jakots) and right (T.Lassy), just under the frame. One needs a very good magnifying glass to read them.

The stamps were printed by the printing plant of Krafft and Drotleff of Sibiu (the Romanian name of the town of Nagy Szeben); apparently the two printing plants formerly involved in producing the Hohe Rinne stamps meanwhile merged. The stamps were relief printed, by typography, with half-tone center and portraits, in sheets of ten, Perf. 11 1/2. The stamps have no denomination and are distinguished only by their color: the green stamp was sold for 50 bani and the carmine for 1 leu. Originally, the green was intended for cards and the carmine for letters; however, it seems that at or after the official existence of the local postal service, carmine stamps were also used for cards. The total printing was 30,000 stamps (3,000 sheets) of each.

From the ten stamps in the sheet, six have slight distinguishing marks; these are explained below, based on the following layout*:

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

1 There is a colored dot in the sky to the left of the roof, below "2" in "1924.

3 There is a colored dot in the sky above the trees, below the "1" in "1924".

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* This description is again based on the article by the Williams' brothers referenced in connection with the Seventh Issue.

4 There is no "flag" on the roof of the main building.

5 On the right-side of the upper left portrait, just below the right top triangular ornament's point, there is an elongated colored mark.

9 On the right-side of the upper left portrait, to the right of the lower right triangular ornament, there are two small elongated marks, pointing toward the corner of the center picture.

10 There is a comet-like mark in the sky to the left of the "flag" on the roof of the main building.

Imperforate and other fancy copies of these stamps are known to exist, however, these are printers' waste and were sold only well after the local postal service ceased to exist.

The stamps were used until sometime in 1926 when the local carrier service ceased to exist and the Romanian Postal Service established a regular office at the resort.

Hotel Post Cancellations at Hohe Rinne

I know of nine different cancellations used by the office of the Society at the resort:

(1) The first issue was cancelled with a mark giving the name as

KURHAUS
auf der
HOHEN RINNE

(2) Starting with the second issue a circular canceller was introduced with "Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein-Kurhaus" curved around the upper part and "auf der Hohen Rinne - Section Hermannstadt" around the lower part, with the date in the middle. Figure 11 shows this cancellation.

(3) An oblong canceller with the title

KURHAUS
"AUF DER HOHEN RINNE"

was also used with the second issue. This cancellation is shown in Figure 12.

(4) In 1905 a canceller similar to (2) was introduced. On this, the text of the outer circle remained the same and the type of lettering is almost identical. The text in the inner circle was changed to KURHAUS in the upper half and "HOHE RINNE" in the lower half, both in capital letters. Figure 13 shows this cancellation.

(5) In 1910, an oblong rectangular canceller was introduced and used concurrently with the previous one. This canceller had the following text:

Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein
Sektion Hermannstadt
KURHAUS HOHE RINNE

with the date in the middle.

(6) The 1924 issue is cancelled with four different types of cancellers. The first was a rectangular mark with the text "SEKTION HERMANNSTADT" S.K.V. This is shown in Figure 14.

(7) The second canceller used with the 1924 issue consisted of the text "HOHE RINNE" in double-lined capital letters and the date. Such a cancellation is shown in Figure 15.

(8) The third canceller used with the 1924 issue had the text Direktion des Kurhauses "HOHE RINNE". It is shown in Figure 16.

(9) Finally, some of the stamps of the 1924 issue were cancelled by a date stamp only. Such a cancellation is shown in Figure 17.

The color of the ink was usually purple but variations from red to dirty brown and bluish are also known.

Figure 11.
Canceller (2).

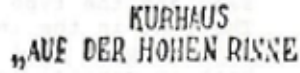

Figure 12.
Canceller (3).

Figure 13.
Canceller (4).

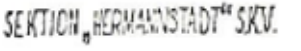

Figure 14.
Canceller ((6)

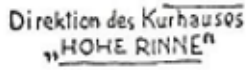

Figure 15.
Canceller (7)

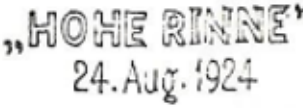

Figure 16.
Canceller (8).

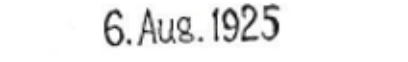

Figure 17.
Canceller (9).

PART THREE: THE ISSUES OF "BISTRA"

"Bistra" is a Romanian expression and there are a number of locations with this name in Transylvania; for this reason, compilations often grossly mislocate the Bistra we are discussing here. For example, there is a small river named Bistra in the Muntii Calimani (this is the Romanian name of the mountain range; the old Hungarian name is Kelemen Havasok or, in English, the Coloman Alps) and I have read discussions of the hotel posts written in Hungarian which placed "our" Bistra there. Actually, the resort Bistra (in Hungarian: Bisztra, Bisztratelep, Bistra Colony, or Bistra Settlement) was located in the Szász Sebes - Nagy Szeben area, south of Szász Sebes.

Bistra was an unincorporated small village administratively belonging to Zsinna (now: Jina); the nearest post office was at Pojána (Poiana Sibiului) and the nearest telegraph office at Szerdahely (Miercurea) meaning the telegraph at the railroad station of the Szász Sebes - Nagy Szeben line.* We should not think on a real town or village; we speak here only about a number of houses in the mountains. The actual resort Bistra was about 30 miles (50 km) southeast of Szász Sebes, up on the mountains. I indicated its location on Map No. 3, based on a map collection published in the 1930s by the Hungarian Cartography Institute.

Most likely, although the area geographically belonged to the village of Bistra, it was easier to get to Szász Sebes than to Zsinna; also, most likely, Zsinna was such a small village that it could not provide the proper supply while Szász Sebes was an old, traditional, typical German town. This is the reason why supply from and to the resort - including the mail service - was handled by a grocery store in Szász Sebes.

The cottage colony was established during the first years of this century and managed by the Szász Sebes (in German: MÜHLBACH) branch of the Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein. As stated by the booklet of the Williams'

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* These data are from the 1898 official Hungarian town list (courtesy of Dr. Z. Sólyom-Fekete at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.). At that time the railroad stations of small villages were authorized to handle and forward private telegraphs also.

brothers, "there was no government postal service linking Bistra (referring here to the resort) with the outside world, so the proprietors arranged to carry mail on their horse-drawn vehicle which made the journey to and from Bistra and Szász Sebes every Tuesday and Friday". This service was actually carried out by the store of Johann Rilki, in Szász Sebes, who evidently had a kind of monopoly.

For the transportation of newspapers a fee of 2 fillér (heller) was asked while the rate for postal cards and letters was 6 fillér (heller). Similar to Hohe Rinne, they also produced stamps to have a proof of the payment of this charge: a quantity of 5,000 of stamps of each denomination is said to have been prepared. The stamps were designed by Dr. Ernst Krauss, the president of the Szász Sebes branch ("Section Mühlbach") of the Carpathian Society of Transylvania; the design shows a fir tree and the texts "S.K.V. - Section Mühlbach" and "Bistra Post". The die for the printing was prepared in Vienna and the actual printing was done at Szász Sebes; there is no record about the actual printing plant. Figure 18 shows a copy of this stamp, with Johann Rilki's cancellation.

Figure 18. A copy of the Bistra-post stamp, with Johann Rilki's cancellation.

We have some problem with the date of issue and in fact also with the stamps. Older philatelic books and catalogues give the year when the stamps were issued as 1912 (e.g. Jászai in his book* gives the date of issue as June 1, 1912). In their booklet, the Williams brothers advanced it to 1909 and confirm this by showing the photo of a postal card mailed to Nagy Szeben on July 3, 1909. According to recent information from them, there is now new evidence for use as early as 1907.

The second problem we have is with the stamps themselves. Evidently not many people wanted to receive 4-5 days old newspapers and there is a question whether the 2-h stamps

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* Jászai E.J.: A Magyar Bélyegek Katalogusa (Catalogue of Hungarian Stamps). Arnold Frigyes, Wien, 1927.

have ever been in actual use. As stated by the Williams brothers, only one example of the 2-h stamp on piece with cancellation is known but this can be cancelled to order*. Even mint copies of this stamp are very scarce: a block of 16, a block of four and a few other multiples as well as a few copies are known to exist only.

In 1912, the local rates were unified to 6 h for any kind of mail. At this time, the remaining 2-h stamps were withdrawn (stored at the resort).

The stamps were sold at the resort and also at the general store of Johann Rilki, a general store in Szász Sebes; he handled the mail service to and from the resort and he also served as the local mailman at Szász Sebes. As a conclusion, we have a basic difference between the Bistra service and the service at Hohe Rinne: at Hohe Rinne the mail was carried directly to and from the post office and thus, even "local" letters (i.e. mail addressed until 1908 to Keresztényszigeti and after 1908 to Nagy Szeben) needed the regular Hungarian postage stamps in addition to the hotel post stamps. On the other hand, in case of Bistra mail, those which were addressed to Szász Sebes or mailed from Szászsebes, needed only the hotel post stamps: evidently, mail to the resort was simply dropped at Rilki's store while mail from the resort to Szász Sebes was either delivered by Rilki or could be picked up at his store. Thus, only mail from or to outside Szász Sebes needed additional Hungarian stamps.

Three types of cancellers were in use. At the resort, they used oval or circular cancellers while mail sent up to the resort bears an oblong single-lined cancellation having the name Johann Rilki in script letters. These markings show no date; thus only mail addressed outside Szász Sebes (or from there) has cancellation dates, in the Hungarian post office canceller.

The local postal service of Bistra was in use only for a few years. We have information about its ending with conflicting dates. First, let us see the story according to the Williams brothers.

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* When speaking about this period, one should never forget that at this time, stamps with cancellation were much more important for collectors than mint stamps.

Evidently, the Hungarian Postal Service in some way started to object to the local service. According to the Williams' brothers the main reason for this was that the stamps had the inscription "Bistra Post" and only the official government service was permitted to use the term "post". In my opinion, however, the fact that local service to and from Szász Sebes was handled directly might have also contributed to the objections. Anyway, in 1912, one day, two officials of the Royal Hungarian Postal Service arrived at the resort and confiscated the entire supply of the local stamps most of which consisted of the already withdrawn 2-h stamps. The confiscated stamps were sent to Budapest, to the central office of the Royal Hungarian Postal Service where they were later destroyed.

After these events, the Carpathian Society of Transylvania submitted a claim to the Hungarian Postal Service for compensation for the loss in revenue in operating the local mail service. The claim was accepted and, in 1913, the sum of 150 K was paid; evidently further compensations were also promised. However, in 1914, upon the outbreak of the World War, the resort's horses and vehicles were confiscated for military service and no more compensation was paid.

So far the story of the Williams brothers. I don't know their sources and certainly, there is a problem with the dates. Jászai, in his quoted book, states that the service was in operation until July 26, 1913, and he shows the photo of a piece containing a 5-f Hungarian stamp plus a 6-h Bistra stamp, cancelled on July 26, 1913, at 7 PM at Szász Sebes. This is one year after the alleged confiscation!

Discussion of the Bistra Stamps

As already mentioned the design of the stamps consisted of a fir tree and the texts "S.K.V. - Section Mühlbach" and "Bistra Post". The stamp was designed by Dr. Ernst Krauss, the president of the Szász Sebes Branch of the Society; the die was prepared by Angerer and Goschel, in Vienna while the printing was done by lithography in Szász Sebes. The stamps have Perf. 11 1/2. A total of 5,000 of each denomination was printed but we don't know how many were destroyed later. The 2-h stamp is brown on yellow paper while the 6-h stamp is brown on white paper.

PART FOUR: PHILATELY RELATED TO OTHER RESORTS OF THE CARPATHIAN SOCIETY OF TRANSYLVANIA

Hohe Rinne and Bistra were not the only resorts of the Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein: as mentioned in the Introduction, they maintained a total of 22 shelters and cottages. Thus, it is most likely that other resorts also had some kind of special postal service. I know of two.

In 1938, the Bélyeggyüjtő, a Hungarian monthly philatelic journal published an article on Hungarian private cancellers.* Here, they dealt with fifteen cancellers all from mountain shelters and cottages. From these three were related to the Siebenbürgischer Karpathenverein. One of these has already been shown (Figure 11) while the other two refer to resorts other than Hohe Rinne or Bistra.

Figure 19.
The cancellation of Negoihütte of the S.K.V.

Figure 20.
The cancellation of Bulleahütte of the S.K.V.

The two additional resorts are "Negoihütte" and "Bullea-hutte". "Hütte" means cottage. As reported in the quoted article, both used a special canceller on letters or cards mailed at the resort. Figures 19-20 show the two cancellations.

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* Anon., "Magyarországi Magánbélyegzők." (Hungarian private cancellers), Bélyeggyüjtő 17, 216-218 (1938).

I don't know where these cottages were located. The only information published in this article is that every letter from both places was forwarded by the mobile railroad post office on the Nagy Szeben - Kiskapus (today: Sibiu - Copsa Mica) line. Naturally, a Hungarian stamp was needed on the mail and this was cancelled by the railroad post office.

As shown in Map No. 3, the Nagy Szeben - Kiskapus railroad connects Nagy Szeben with the Gyulafehérvár - Balázsfalva - Medgyes - Segesvár (today: Alba Iulia - Blaj - Medias - Sighisoara) line which in turn is part of the main Budapest - Brassó (today: Brasov; in German: Kronstadt) railroad line. This means that these two resorts had to be located somewhere in this area.

According to the quoted article, both cancellers were in use in 1906.

Except the quoted article, I don't know of any more information about these two locations or about any other resort, shelter or cottage of the Society.

S U P P L E M E N T

Through the courtesy of Dr. Ferenc N a g y of Vienna, a well-known expert of Hungarian stamps, I obtained a copy of the original printed regulations of the Carpathian Society of Transylvania concerning the mail service to and from Bistra. This announcement is dated June 1912 when the rates for letters and newspapers were already unified. However, as it will be seen, the "mail service" was much more than a mail service: it handled food purchases, shipment and delivery to vacationers and even carried passengers. It was a real mail coach service!

A number of interesting information can be found in the announcement. First, as already mentioned, the "Bistra coach) ("Bistrawagen") also carried passengers, 2-3 people. It was clearly a long journey, took about 13 hours, and I am sure it was not very comfortable. Also, evidently, there was no food service or restaurant up on the mountains, everybody was cooking for him or herself and food supply - particularly that of meat - was a problem handled happily by Mr. R i l k i who certainly was a good businessman. It is also interesting to note that there was a 5-K "entry fee" for using the mail service. It is sure - after all, this was the custom of the period - that most vacationers spent many weeks, probably the whole Summer, up on the mountain, and they needed a continuous supply of foodstuff. The announcement does not say anything about occasional mail. It would be interesting to find out, what happened if somebody who did not pay this "entry fee" received a mail through the Hungarian mail service, properly delivered to Mr. Rilki.

As seen, the service was also available to other vacationers between Szász Sebes (Mühlbach) and Bistra. Sugag is Sugág and it is indicated in Map No. 3. I do not know the Hungarian (or Romanian) name of "Teu" mentioned in this announcement; could it be Zsinna? This is the only other place fairly close to the Szász Sebes - Bistra route.

Below, I give the translation of the regulations concerning the "Bistra mail" service. The original was written in German and I tried to follow the original text as closely as possible. Here, I am using abbreviations for the currencies: K for "Krone" (in Hungarian: korona) and H for Heller (in Hungarian: fillér).

I have one more interesting observation. In the discussion of the Bistra stamps, I gave the name of the president of

the Szász Sebes Branch of the Carpathian Society of Transylvania as Dr. Ernst Krauss. This was based on the handbook of the Williams' brothers. However, in the original German text of the present announcement, his name is given as Dr. Gustav Krauss. Somewhere, there must be an error.

Translation of the German original:

"B I S T R A M A I L" R A T E S

1. The mail coach leaves every Tuesday and Friday at 6 o'clock in the morning from the store of Mr. Johann R i l k i (Mühlbach, Sikulorum Street 5) and arrives at Bistra Colony at about 7 o'clock in the evening; it leaves from there next morning at 7 o'clock in the morning.

   It should be mentioned that if notified earlier, the coach would wait for tourists arriving in Mühlbach with the train of 6:43; in this case, the coach leaves at 7:15.

   The Bistra-coach is also at the disposal of the vacationers living in the vicinity of Bistra (Teu, Sugág), by payment of the rates given below. However, due to the special regulations concerning the delivery of their mail, these vacationers are requested to contact the management of the Society.

2. All parcels, letters, newspapers, etc. should be delivered to the store of Mr. Johann R i l k i latest at 6 o'clock the previous evening. The only exception is meat which can be delivered up to 5:30 in the morning. It should be noted that upon proper ordering, Mr. Rilki would directly purchase the meat and deliver it to Bistra. However, in case of meat shipment, a special bag made of linen and having an identification mark must be used.

3. In Bistra Colony, a person is assigned to handle the mail and take care of obtaining and delivering it. Mail sent from Bistra can be given to him until 6:30 in the morning of the day when the coach is leaving.

4. Passenger Rates:

   (a) Members of the Carpathian Society, travelling to

or from Bistra: 6 K per person. Roundtrip tickets valid for eight days: 9 K per person.

(b) Non-members, travelling to or from Bistra: 8 K per person. Round trip tickets valid for eight days: 12 K per person.

5. Parcel and Mail Rates:

(a) For members of the Carpathian Society: 15 H per kilogram.

(b) For non-members: 19 H per kilogram.

(c) Letters and newspapers have to be franked with a 6-H stamp which can be purchased in Mühlbach at Mr. Rilki and in Bistra from the person handling the mail.

(d) In case of meat shipment, the rate is increased by 5 H per kilogram as payment for the ice.

(e) Orders sent to Mr. Rilki or return shipment of empty boxes, crates, etc. are free of charge.

6. General Conditions:

(a) For the use of Bistra mail, a basic tax of 5 K is to be paid for each permanent dwelling. This basic tax is also to be paid by the vacationers in the vicinity of Bistra (Sugág, Teu) who are using the Bistra mail service.

(b) Orders made through domestic servants for whom their employer is in all cases fully responsible, will only be fulfilled if they are signed by the employer.

(c) The employees of the Imperial and Royal Forest Service enjoy free franking for mail and pay for parcels the rates specified for the members of the Carpathian Society.

(d) The public is reminded that the only obligations Mr. Johann R i l k i has are the delivery of mails and parcels given or sent to him and the purchase of meat. Mr. Rilki is also happy to procure other items, however, he is doing this as a favor and the public should recognize this.

(e) Letters and newspapers cannot be included in the parcels.

(f) According to the resolution of the General Meeting of the Society, the head of Bistra mail has the right to open and control any suspicious parcel in the present of addressee.

(g) If somebody deceives or damages the Bistra mail service, he will pay as penalty ten times the corresponding rate. In repeated cases the head of Bistra mail has the right to exclude the person from any further use of the service.

(h) The public is reminded that the Bistra coach has only two places available when travelling from Mühlbach to Bistra and maybe three places when travelling down from the mountain. The seats are to be paid upon reservation and the payment will not be paid back under any circumstances.

Mühlheim (Szász Sebes), June 1912

The Section Management of the Carpathian Society of Transylvania:

Dr. Gustav K r a u s s
President

Heinrich G o o s s
Secretary

(seal of the Society)

Printed by Johann Stegmann, in Mühlbach.